

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN

## Sugar River Planning Group



### Overview

This document outlines the public participation plan for soliciting public review and input into the development, evaluation and adoption of a Master Plan for the properties included in the Sugar River Wildlife, Fishery, Natural and Ice Age Trail Areas Planning Group (SRPG). These properties are listed below. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) recognizes that sound planning is a partnership effort with the people it serves and that the end product must have both broad public support and fit the capabilities of the properties.

#### **Wildlife Areas**

Albany  
Avon Bottoms  
Badfish Creek  
Evansville  
Grass Lake  
Liberty

#### **Fishery Areas**

Anthony Branch  
Allen Creek

#### **State Natural Area**

Hook Lake Bog

#### **Ice Age Trail Area**

Montrose

#### **Public Hunting Grounds**

Footville

Master Plan development will be based on and influenced by existing statutes, administrative codes, scientific data, the ecological capabilities of the resources, judgment of resource management professionals, and public experience and opinion. Local and regional recreational opportunities, economic and social conditions will also be considered. The approved Master Plan will direct the management to best meet the habitat and recreation needs of these properties in a local, regional and statewide context.

### Planning Process

The Master Planning process is divided into three primary phases:

#### **Phase 1**

Phase one is preparatory work. Information about the properties' resources, public uses, regional demands and opportunities are compiled as a foundation for the planning process. This information is presented to the public in the draft Regional and Property Analysis document. After receiving public comments, the background information for the properties' current and potential functional role in the region is finalized in the Regional and Property Analysis.

## **Phase 2**

Phase two is Plan development. This phase begins with a formal public announcement that the properties' Master Plan will be revised. The announcement is followed by a public open house to share information on the process, obtain public feedback on important issues to be addressed in the plan, and to consider a preliminary vision and goals for the properties. The Department will use public input along with other data to evaluate management options in development of a draft master plan and environmental assessment. Public input to the process is described in the following "Ways to Make Your Voice Heard." section.

## **Phase 3**

Phase three is presentation of the draft revised Master Plan to the Natural Resources Board for approval.

## **Opportunities for Participation in Planning**

The Department's goals for public involvement in Master Planning are to offer the public meaningful ways to be involved in shaping the future management and use of their favorite properties, and to provide a means for interested people to stay informed about the property and planning progress. Public review and comment will be formally sought at key milestones during the plan's development and approval process. However, public comments are welcome at any time. There are three formal public input points in the process:

- At the beginning of the Plan development process (Phase 2 discussed above) to help identify important issues to be considered in the Plan, and to consider the preliminary vision and goals for the properties,
- To review and comment on the draft Plan and its environmental impact assessment, and
- Lastly, the Natural Resources Board offers the public an opportunity to provide input to them when they consider approval of the proposed Master Plan revision.

## **Ways You May Make Your Voice Heard**

**Public meetings:** DNR staff will hold at least two public meetings, in an open house format, as described above to present and discuss information about the properties and the plan proposals, and to listen to your comments and suggestions. These meetings will be held in the vicinity of the properties.

**Other ways to comment:** If you are unable to attend a meeting or if you think of comments you want to give after the meeting you may submit comments to the planning team by e-mail, postal-mail or by phone. Contact information is provided at the end of this document.

## **How Decisions will be Made**

To develop an effective property master plan, the Department listens to many voices. Recreation users, commercial interests, neighboring landowners, conservation groups, elected officials, other government agencies, tribal representatives, and other interested persons or groups are all encouraged to participate as appropriate. Input received during each step in the planning process will be considered as the plan is developed.

Decisions on which ideas to incorporate into the plan will be made based on the type of property, its capabilities, and the best role of the property in its local, regional and statewide context, and on the professional expertise of DNR staff. Further, the plan must comply with applicable Federal Laws, State Statutes, Administrative and Department Codes, and facility design standards. The final decision-making responsibility and authority for the master plan rests with the DNR's citizen policy-making Natural Resources Board.

## **How the Department will Provide Planning Information to You**

### **Issue Press Releases**

Press releases will be issued prior to the open houses and the presentation to the Natural Resources Board. They will be used to provide information about meetings, planning updates and solicit public comments. Local and state newspapers and electronic news media will be included in the distribution list.

### **Provide GovDelivery email notice**

The GovDelivery email system will be used to keep interested parties informed about upcoming events, discussions and revised documents. GovDelivery is an electronic notification list providing links to the master planning and property web pages and will be used to inform landowners, user groups, sporting clubs, environmental groups, service groups, local government, state officials, and affected Indian Tribes of key meetings and document releases during the planning process. The public is encouraged to sign up for Gov Delivery by following information provided in media releases, going to WDNR Property Planning web pages, or contacting the Department using the information at the end of this document.

### **Provide a Web Page**

The Department will set up a Sugar River Planning Group master planning web page where information about the properties, the planning process, draft plan documents, notices, planning progress reports and other important planning information may be accessed.

### **Planning Reports**

After each formal public input step the Department will provide notification to communicate the results of the review. Additionally, when needed, a progress report will be prepared to keep you informed on the status of the plan's development. Notice information will be emailed using Gov Delivery and posted on the master planning website.

### **Conduct Special Meetings if Needed**

Additional public meetings may be held, if needed, at various stages of the planning process to discuss specific issues in depth. All public meetings will be announced following open records procedures and timelines. Focus group meetings may be held with selected representatives to work through special management issues or other concerns that may arise.

## **Consultation with Other Governmental Units**

Throughout the planning process, the master planning team will also be consulting with local governments, state and federal agencies, and affected Indian Tribes on a government-to-government basis on mutual planning issues.

## **The Master Plan process is guided by the following state regulations:**

- The plan will be developed within the parameters of Administrative Code, Chapter NR 1.60 and NR 44, which governs Master Planning for DNR properties and requirements of the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act.
- The Wildlife and Fishery Areas will be managed under authority of Sec. 23.09 (2)(d)3 Wis. Statutes. Natural Areas will be managed under authority of Sec. 23.27 Wis. Statutes.
- Wildlife Areas are managed and developed in accordance with Administrative Code, Chapters NR 1.51 and 1.61.
- Fisheries Areas are managed and developed in accordance with Administrative Code, Chapters NR 1.01 and 1.02.
- Rules governing the general management and use of State Natural Areas are outlined in Administrative Code, Chapter NR 1.32.
- Public use activities on DNR properties are governed by Administrative Code, Chapter NR 45 (Use of Department Properties). These properties have either been purchased or managed using funding from the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (also known as the Pittman-Robertson Act). The statutes and applicable regulations prohibit a state fish and wildlife agency from allowing recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State acquired, developed, or is managing the land.

## **Contact Information:**

To give comments or suggestions on the planning process or to learn how to sign up for Gov Delivery notices, please contact:

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Property-specific comments contact:

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